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Altisländisches Elementarbuch, von B. Kahle. Heidelberg : Carl Winter, 1900.¹

For academic courses in Icelandic there are now a number of grammars available which are practically up to date, but which differ widely from each other in regard to size and mode of presentation. Noreen's *Altisländische und Altnorwegische Grammatik*, in its third edition, 1903, a volume of 419 pages, is the standard work on the subject and the fountain-head of the other publications. It is one of those thoroughly satisfactory books which evade no difficulty, which encourage the reader's inquisitiveness by answering, in the right place, such side-questions as must present themselves to the careful student in his daily work. With its wealth of material and its clearness of disposition and expression, it imparts to the student a breath of the author's own spirit, his stern method in dealing with an intricate subject. And there are those of us who believe in placing just such books in the hand of the student, at the outset. But while the earnest young specialist will not be satisfied with anything short of Noreen, we may yet find, or think, it desirable at times, to select a shorter text book which can be gone through in an introductory course by a heterogeneous class of students. In such a case we may turn to Kahle, *Altisländisches Elementarbuch*, the third volume of Streitberg's series of Germanic grammars. On 238 pages it contains a bibliography, phonology, inflections, reading matter, syntactical remarks, vocabulary, grammatical indices, all in very clear and rationally differentiated print. It seems to offer all that is necessary for the beginner and to contain a complete little course in itself. And that is the trouble about it. In the hands of an indolent teacher it is apt to keep the student within its own little world and to leave him, at the end of the course, under the impression, that he has 'done his Icelandic.' Of course, this is not Kahle's intention; the book is to form the basis upon which an academic course may be given by an earnest teacher who will supply his students with further information and direction. For Kahle gives only, what seems quite indispensable. By a skill-

¹ The date, 1900, is misleading. In reality the book was published in 1896. The present exact reprint makes no mention of that fact, but appears in the guise of a new book, a device which is clearly an injustice both to the author and to the public.

fully calculated wording of his rules he has worked a remarkable amount of correct information into his book; but, after all, Noreen's grammar is, itself, a model of conciseness, and the only way of producing a 'Kürzere Darstellung' was to present less material. This has been done, in the first place, by treating the Icelandic alone, a limitation which is scientifically quite commendable, but rather a luxury or an inconvenience. To write separate grammars of Icelandic and of Old Norwegian is about like making a special text book for each one of the Old High German or Old English dialects. In the second place, many individual details could be left out which are cases *sui generis* and throw no special light on the general structure of the language. Noreen mentions them mostly in his notes, in special print, and by ignoring them, an abridged text can readily be obtained without much serious loss from the strictly grammatical point of view. True, as soon as we turn to the reading of literature, these extras have a way of occurring, and Noreen's notes will then be found useful. Furthermore, the number of illustrative examples could be reduced, and often, several paragraphs of Noreen's, containing minutely differentiated rules, could be condensed into one general formula. This was a difficult and precarious matter; but it must be said, that Kahle has, on the whole, succeeded in wording such statements so felicitously, that while they are less explicit, they are in no way misleading. The remarks on the principal points of Icelandic syntax are about of the same character as those in Holthausen's *Elementarbuch*, and the whole chapter, brief as it is, forms a welcome addition, inasmuch as Noreen, unfortunately, says nothing on the subject, and there is no comprehensive treatise, in fact very little of anything on Norse syntax accessible to the student who is not familiar with the modern Scandinavian languages. In conclusion it should be said, that, while for his subject matter Kahle naturally depends chiefly upon Noreen, Wimmer and Lund, he has, nevertheless given us distinctly a grammar of his own, and it is needless to add, that the author of *die Sprache der Skalden*,—who is now one of the foremost Scandinavian scholars in Germany,—is a very safe guide. The first edition is, unfortunately, somewhat marred by an inordinate number of errata, an objectionable feature in a text book. Besides those which the author himself corrects on pp. 236 ff., I have noticed some which may be mentioned here, together with a few additional questions and suggestions.

Page VI. (Preface).—‘Der Leser wird beim Aufschlagen der Wörter sich die Veränderungen, besonders der Endvokale und des Wandels von *ø* zu *æ* ins Gedächtniss rufen müssen.’ This is rather faulty German, and especially, the important rapprochement of *ø* zu *æ* (and *ó* to *á*) is not mentioned in the grammar itself !

p. 6.—‘Das Nordgermanische bildet gegenüber dem Ostgermanischen und Westgermanischen eine Einheit.’ In this dogmatic form the statement is out of season ; the student of Icelandic is sure to have heard it before ; what he now wants, is the evidence.

p. 14.—It should be stated, that the character of *g* before *s* and *t* as a voiceless fricative is a transitory phase only.

p. 14.—The §§ 44, 45, 46 operate with speculations some of which are unfruitful and certainly confusing to the beginner, while others are unfounded. There is no reason why *hl* in *hlaupa* should be ‘stimmloses *l* und stimmhaftes *l*,’ when in *villa*, *mála*, *rána* these sounds were quite voiceless. The question is a chronological one.

p. 15.—‘*v* ist ursprünglich labiolabial wie das *b* in mitteldeutschen Dialekten in ‘haben,’ später labiodental wie *f* in ‘fahren.’ (§ 228).’—A very unfortunate paragraph : The reference to § 228 is a misprint for 227 ; the *v* is not originally like *b* in Middle German dialects ; the form in those dialects is not ‘haben,’ and *v* does not develop into a labiodental like *f* in ‘fahren.’ The paragraph should read : ‘*v*, ursprüngl. *u* consonans, wird zum labiolabialen, später zum labiodentalen, stimmhaften Reibelaut.’

p. 15.—*þ* is not always voiceless in Icelandic, nor in this grammar, but stands for the voiced fricative also.

p. 41.—The shortening of vowels before *l* + *consonant* is not plausible in view of the fact, that the same consonantal groups cause the opposite development, lengthening of short vowels, in Icelandic. It seems, so far as I can see, that the shortening takes place only before *l* + *double consonant*, and probably in syllables which have not the *chief stress*, and that *tolf* has been influenced by *tolft* and *tolfróðr*, *helge* by *helgr* and by combinations such as *enn hëlge ánde* and names of saints in which the chief stress was on the noun (cp. Engl. *child* : *children* ; Italian *San-* from *santo*).

p. 41.—In § 147 add *é* after aisl. *ei*.

p. 42.—In § 148 add *ó* after aisl. *au*.

p. 43.—In § 153 there is no reason why *ǰ* should not be given a

regular place in the seventh series. (cf., however, Noreen § 165.) To the various examples given by Noreen it may be permitted here to add *glæggr* 'clear,' *gler* 'glass': *glóa*, O. Engl. *glōwan*.

p. 43.—After § 153 a few words on, and examples of, 'mixed series' would have been welcome.

p. 47.—'keypta aus keyptða, vgl. got. kaupatjan.' The Gothic *kaupatjan*, pret. *kaupasta* 'ohrfeigen' would alone not prove the existence of a West-Scandinavian **keyptða*. Cf., however, Noreen § 229 anm. 6, where the real reason appears; only the *t* of *keypta* cannot be called 'urgermanisch,' like that of *purfta*; *keypta* belongs into Noreen's § 266; at least the reference to 259, 2 should be changed to 266.

p. 50.—In the first note to § 184 read 'velaren oder palatalen stimmlosen Reibelant.'

p. 66.—*iátneng* 'Bejahung'; when so many other, self-evident etymologies are given, some hint would have been in place here, or later on in connection with the verbs *iá* or *iátta*, indicating that **jehan* is, partly at least, back of these words.

p. 82.—Read *laugen* for *laug*.

p. 91.—Read *spakare* for *spakara*, acc. fem.

p. 99.—*tigenn* alone is given without a word of explanation; yet Kahle's own texts show the organic short *i*.

p. 112.—Read *fóro* for *fōro*.

p. 122.—Here, or in § 464, the characteristic Norse preference for impersonal expressions should have been pointed out.

p. 124.—Read 'durch ihn' for 'gegen ihn.'

p. 132.—In speaking of the various functions of 'medio-passive' verbs we should take into consideration 1. that these fundamentally active verbs could be either reflexive or reciprocal; 2. that the pronoun originally denoted either the direct or the more indirect object. Of course, only the reflexive verbs with a direct pronoun object could gradually develop a passive meaning, while reciprocal verbs, and verbs like *kuðask*, *þykkiask*, or *staðfestask*, *eignask*, *haldask* (the latter group being combined with a mere 'dativus ethicus' or 'commodi') retained their active meaning. Whether in some of them the reflexive idea dropped into the background more than in others, is largely a matter of modern translation. We may say, that *staðfestask*, *eignask*, *haldask* mean 'to settle,' 'to appropriate,' 'to hold,' while Kahle calls them 'reflexive' verbs; on the

other hand, a German may feel *kueðomk*, *þykkjomk* as 'ich sage mir,' 'ich denke mir,' while Kahle mentions them as 'aktiv, d. h. die ursprüngliche medio-passive Bedeutung ist in den Hintergrund getreten.' The designation 'medio-passiv' is in this case a misnomer. The one precious remnant *heite* might have been mentioned in the note.—*settusk þau* 'sie setzten sich' is a curious illustration of *reciprocal* function !

Of the texts, pp. 145-185, not much is to be said, except that the translations and grammatical notes are useless, while the remarks on the history of Iceland and on the conditions of life on the island are quite helpful.

The vocabulary gives only the most rudimentary information and, at times, fails to enable the student to do justice to the text. The alphabetical order is not always strictly maintained ; the difference between *ð* and *þ* should have been observed more carefully throughout the book. A few further details may be noticed.

p. 189.—*allz*, meaning 'when, as,' is not simply the genitive sing., but it consists of *allt* (or gen. *allz*) + *es*.

p. 189.—*andaðr* 'gestorben' is given under *anda* 'atmen,' while the form *endaðr* is not mentioned at all, nor *enda* from which it and probably *andaðr* are formed.

p. 196.—*fata* 's. *feta*'; but no *feta* is given.

p. 199.—Under *fyr* the characteristic expression *vera, verða, fyr sér* should be mentioned.

p. 201.—*gleðe* is given as neuter; it is feminine.

p. 201.—*golf* 'Fussboden, Diele'; the more common meaning is 'dwelling, room.'

p. 206.—*hvaðan* 'vorher'; read 'woher.'

p. 210.—Why is *lageðr* given a special place, when similar forms of other verbs are not quoted ?

p. 212.—*manvizbrekka* 'F?'; why this question in a case etymologically so clear as *brekka* ?

p. 214.—Under *nauðsyn*: *oss berr nauðsyn* 'für uns liegt die Notwendigkeit vor.' The author seems to consider *nauðsyn* the subject of the phrase. The expression is an impersonal one = 'es thut uns Not.'

p. 219.—*setia*; the expression *setia ráð við* should have been mentioned.

p. 225.—*tigenn*; read *tigenn*.

p. 226.—*trygðar* ; the sing. form *tryggð* should have been mentioned also.

p. 228.—*vegr* ; add M.

p. 228.—Under *veita*, '*honom er veit*'; the full expression is *honom er veit í*.

p. 231.—*þríóta* 'zu Ende gehen'; *veizlona þrýtr* 'das Gastmahl geht zu Ende'; the case is like that quoted under *bera*; the verb is originally transitive (cf. Gothic *þriutan*) and the construction is an impersonal one.

p. 237.—Addition to § 220 ; *r* schwindet vor *s* 'gegen Ende des 13. Jahrhunderts'; the change appears to have occurred earlier, in the first half of the 13th century; cf. *vesalinga*, p. 150 (from the *Homilfubók*).

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Otto Jespersen. *Sprogundervisning*. København, 1901.

In this small volume of 183 pages we have the fully matured views of a very competent authority on the teaching of languages. As is well known, Jespersen belongs to a small group of eminent phoneticians—Sweet, Storm, Lundell, Vietor, Passy, etc.—who were led some years ago to take a keen interest in the practical questions of language-teaching, because they had observed that the ordinary work of the schools led to meagre and often shabby results. The pupil who had studied his modern language several years could neither pronounce it decently from a book, nor speak it so as to be understood by one to the manner born, nor write it without ridiculous blunders. His only valuable attainment was the ability to read books in the language studied,—of course with a very imperfect appreciation of idiomatic niceties. This seemed to show that methods of teaching must be radically vicious ; for it was matter of common observation that children under favorable conditions could in a few months acquire by imitation a proficiency such as the schools utterly failed to impart after years of effort.

Hence came the conviction on the part of prominent linguistic scholars like those mentioned above that a reform was really needed